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SURINAME: Friction in the Regime

The increased political infighting between the two leftist parties supporting the fragile regime of Army Commander Bouterse may provoke a government crisis. []

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The party that includes People's Mobilization Minister Sital reportedly opposes the plans of pro-Bouterse Prime Minister Alibux's party to reconcile with the Dutch and to limit Cuba's involvement in Suriname. []

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Comment: Sital, who is a Marxist, is widely considered to be Havana's choice as Suriname's eventual ruler. The Cubans have sponsored him since 1980. Sital's control of the militia gives him an armed power base and offers him an opportunity to cultivate political support. []

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Sital and his supporters may intend to make a grab for power, but Bouterse's military backers are aware of their ambitions and could move to thwart them. In August 1980 Bouterse imprisoned Sital on charges of plotting a coup with Cuba's complicity. []

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The Cubans evidently are becoming alarmed about the situation. If Alibux's party prevails, the regime probably would follow a more cautious policy toward Havana—especially in view of Brazil's recent concerns. If Sital's influence prevails, however, increased radicalization of Suriname is likely. []

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USSR-SYRIA: Soviet Military Presence

The more prominent Soviet military presence in Syria is prompting defensive claims from Damascus about the limits of the USSR's role.

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An English-language Syrian newspaper on Wednesday ran a Pakistani article on the Soviet military presence in Syria. It noted the Pakistani claim that the USSR's involvement was justified and stated Syria shared this view. The article also noted, however, that this presence should not be prolonged and that the Syrian military should eventually replace the Soviets and allow them to return home.

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The newspaper account of the USSR's role underscores Syrian sensitivity to charges of having become a Soviet outpost in the Middle East. At the same time, however, the heightened tension between Syria and Israel reinforce the continuing importance to Damascus of its military ties to Moscow.

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CANADA-US: Opposition to Cruise-Missile Testing

Opponents of cruise-missile testing in Canada probably will exploit an inaccurate Canadian press report that the US no longer considers the program necessary. [redacted]

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The story was carried on Thursday in the influential Montreal daily *Le Devoir*, which attributed it to sources "close to the US Geneva negotiating team." US officials are said to have told a correspondent who had accompanied Prime Minister Trudeau to Washington that the testing program is nearly complete and that "testing in Canada will not change anything." [redacted]

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Comment: Despite the official US caution that the article is entirely inaccurate, the story is likely to cause more trouble for the Canadian Government. Public opposition to testing has become increasingly strident—over 100,000 demonstrated against it in Toronto and Vancouver last weekend—and many of these opponents are unlikely to believe the US denial. [redacted]

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Nevertheless, the government—which this week reaffirmed its support for US initiatives in both Parliament and during discussions in Washington—probably will stand by its earlier commitment to weapons testing. It is likely to defend it as a part of Canada's contribution to NATO. [redacted]

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Until now, most of the Canadian press has reluctantly endorsed Ottawa's claim that the test program is necessary because of the intransigence of Soviet disarmament negotiators at Geneva. Editorial support also has been encouraged by official US insistence on the need for testing. The article in *Le Devoir* may undercut support in the media for testing and become a rallying point for the growing number of antitesting groups in Canada. [redacted]

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FRANCE: Limited Domestic Unrest

Recent nationwide demonstrations and a surge in Corsican terrorist activity pose serious problems for the government but do not threaten its stability. []

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Disparate groups of students and medical personnel are protesting against new test requirements, a reorganization of the state-run hospital system, and other reforms. The protestors, however, are not challenging the authority of the state or demanding a wholesale reversal of the government's domestic policy. []

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The US Embassy reports farmers' demonstrations are aimed at stiffening the government's position in negotiations within the EC. They are demanding a revision of the Community's price system for agricultural products, which they say makes French products less competitive. []

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Corsican nationalists are claiming credit for some 15 bombings yesterday in major French cities. The attacks are the first by Corsicans on the French mainland since President Mitterrand's election in 1981. They follow a crackdown on terrorist activities in Corsica. []

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Comment: The current unrest is not comparable to the student strikes of May 1968, which nearly toppled the government of President de Gaulle. Only the Corsican terrorists—whose goal of independence for Corsica does not have widespread support—are challenging the authority of the state, and Mitterrand is likely to respond by strengthening antiterrorist measures. []

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The disillusionment of many citizens over aspects of Socialist economic policies probably will not cause Mitterrand to consider abandoning the austerity program. The legitimacy of the government is not being seriously questioned. []

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Sporadic social and labor unrest is likely to grow, however, in part because of the government's austerity measures. Students with bleak prospects for employment may remain a particularly volatile group. []

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UN: Disarmament Committee Adjourns

The 40-member Committee on Disarmament yesterday ended a three-month session in Geneva, which was largely obstructed by the Soviets. []

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The Soviets and their allies stalled the committee by joining with nonaligned states demanding a debate on preventing nuclear war.

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Three weeks ago the committee reestablished working groups on banning chemical, nuclear, and radiological weapons and on protecting non-nuclear-weapons states from nuclear attack. With nonaligned support, however, the Soviets have continued to impede work on these issues, and they have continually demanded the nuclear test ban group be authorized to negotiate a treaty. []

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Comment: When the committee reconvenes in mid-June, the Soviets probably will be more defensive if, as seems likely, they fail to divert the attention of the chemical weapons group from detailed discussions of questions of verification. To do so, the Soviets will continue to try to shift the focus by urging the committee to draft a chemical weapons treaty text, which the US opposes, and by pushing the US to resume bilateral talks. []

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The Soviets recently indicated some slight flexibility on chemical weapons verification, and many nonaligned delegates sympathetic to Western initiatives probably would accept any US-Soviet agreement on verification. Moscow also will be likely to exploit a draft nuclear test ban treaty that Sweden intends to present this summer. Moreover, with nonaligned support, the USSR could further divert the committee's attention by raising outer space arms control issues. []

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ETHIOPIA: Military Developments

Military activity is increasing in northern Ethiopia, but the situation in the Ogaden is returning to normal. [redacted]

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Since mid-April, government forces have initiated new attacks in Eritrea Province. They are trying to interdict guerrilla supply lines and to improve their position around the rebel stronghold of Nakfa. After initially withdrawing, the Eritreans have launched counterattacks to slow the Ethiopian drive. [redacted]

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Comment: The government probably is preparing for another assault on Nakfa, a primary target of the unsuccessful offensive last year. [redacted]

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Despite the return of Ethiopian and Cuban units to their garrisons in the Ogaden, tensions there remain, and more clashes could occur at any time. During the recent fighting, the Cuban forces apparently followed previous patterns and deployed defensively around their garrisons. There is no reliable evidence that any Cuban units were involved in the hostilities or that they moved into the border area. [redacted]

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LEBANON: Sectarian Fighting Resumes

The US Embassy in Beirut reports heavy fighting broke out on Thursday between Druze and Christian militias in the Alayh District east of Beirut.

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Comment: Druze and Christian Phalange militiamen have been eager to resume fighting since mid-February, when the Phalange-dominated Lebanese Forces militia suffered a setback at the hands of the Druze. Despite the Israeli presence, the political and military struggle between the Druze and the Christians is likely to intensify. Fighting will increase communal hatred, making it more difficult to extend government authority into the area in the event of an Israeli withdrawal.

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ITALY: Pertini Agrees to Election Date

President Pertini is expected to dissolve parliament tomorrow or Monday. He has agreed that an early general election be held with local elections already scheduled for 26 and 27 June. Pertini hopes holding the two elections concurrently will enable his Socialist Party to capitalize on its strength in local races to improve its vote in the general election. [REDACTED]

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Socialist Party chief Craxi, however, remains concerned about his party's election prospects and plans a vigorous personal campaign. He is particularly worried that a recent scandal in Turin will damage the party, especially in several of the larger cities. Craxi privately concedes that a score of less than 12 percent of the vote in the general election will be seen as a Socialist defeat. [REDACTED]

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EAST GERMANY-WEST GERMANY: Summit Canceled

East German leader Honecker's cancellation of his visit to Bonn this year is unlikely to lead to a serious deterioration in bilateral relations. The US Embassy reports officials in the East German foreign policy advisory institute yesterday played down the cancellation and claimed the regime wanted to conduct business as usual with West Germany. [REDACTED]

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Comment: East German leaders probably decided that the prospects for a successful summit were poor because of the hostile publicity fostered by Franz Joseph Strauss and other conservative West German politicians over recent border incidents. The East Germans may have calculated that a cancellation now might influence the Bundestag debate on foreign policy next week in Bonn. They probably hope the move will help persuade moderates in the Kohl government of the need to bring Strauss and his supporters under control, in order to "protect" intra-German relations. East Germany's urgent economic needs continue to oblige it to cultivate close relations. [REDACTED]

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USSR-MONGOLIA-CHINA: Harder Line on Troop Withdrawals

The USSR has toughened its public position on troop withdrawals from Mongolia. Last Tuesday *Pravda* reprinted excerpts from an article in the Mongolian Communist Party newspaper criticizing Chinese efforts to persuade the Soviets to make such withdrawals. Moscow embellished the excerpts by inserting praise for its insistence that China discuss the issue directly with Mongolia. *Pravda* also used stronger language advising the Chinese that US activities in the Far East are the real threat to their security, in cautioning against collusion with Washington, and in outlining terms for improved relations with Mongolia. [REDACTED]

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Comment: The toughened language of the excerpt clearly reflects Moscow's desire to underscore its policy on matters involving third parties. At the same time, *Pravda* was careful not to close the door to the possibility of a pullout, noting that Soviet forces in Mongolia have always withdrawn as soon as circumstances have allowed. There is no indication that the increased Soviet criticism will induce Beijing to drop its preconditions for normalizing relations with Moscow or to curtail its public criticism of the USSR's foreign policy. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Sakharov May Leave

Dissident physicist Sakharov, who has been kept in isolation since 1980, has been offered a teaching position by a university in Vienna. He also is considering an earlier, unpublicized invitation from Norway to live there. Western media have linked the Austrian invitation to an earlier statement by the Soviet Minister of Justice on Swedish television that Sakharov probably would be allowed to emigrate. Ministry officials later withdrew the suggestion, noting the emigration issue was outside the competence of their office. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Soviet authorities would prefer not to appear to be encouraging Sakharov to emigrate but evidently want him to leave. They seem to want a quick disposition of several longstanding human rights cases that have attracted Western publicity. Dissident writer Georgiy Vladimov has been given his exit visa for West Germany, and the Pentecostals who left their refuge in the US Embassy are in the process of getting their visas for Israel. The Soviets apparently prefer that departing dissidents announce intended destinations other than the US. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Fast Start for Spring Grains

The spring grain sowing campaign in the USSR is well ahead of the normal schedule. The Central Statistical Administration reports that as of Monday, 26.1 million hectares had been sown, double that of a year ago and second only to the record sown in 1975. Additional grainland is still to be planted in the European USSR and east of the Urals.

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Comment: If farmers maintain this pace and complete planting ahead of schedule, chances are good that the spring crop—which usually accounts for two-thirds of total grain production—will reach the crucial flowering stage before the summer's hottest weather. Weather conditions, however, will still play the key role in determining final grain output. Even with a bumper spring grain harvest, damage already sustained by the winter grains will prevent the USSR from reaching its goal of 238 million tons this year.

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SWITZERLAND-USSR: Soviet Press Office Closed

Swiss authorities yesterday closed the *Novosti* office in Bern, expelled its only Soviet correspondent, and arrested its two Swiss employees. The government accused the office of interfering in the antinuclear and peace movements in Switzerland and stated it would remain closed for the time being.

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Comment: In the past year two Soviet military attaches accused of espionage were forced to leave Switzerland, and a Polish attache found with Swiss military documents was banned from returning to his post after a trip home for medical treatment. Bern's actions yesterday probably reflect a growing determination to restrict Communist espionage activities in Switzerland.

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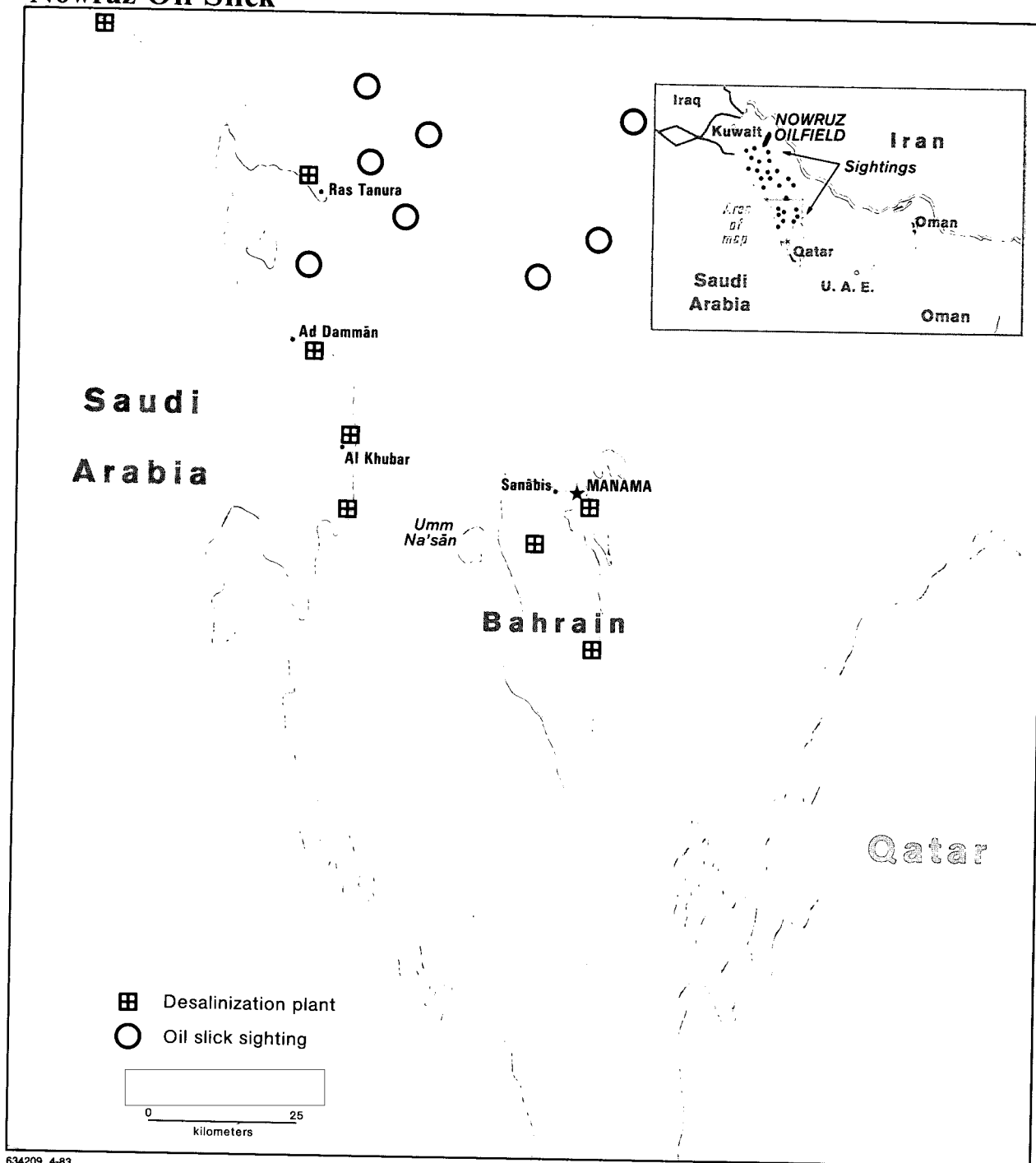
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Nowruz Oil Slick



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BAHRAIN-SAUDI ARABIA: Threat From Oil Spill

Oil from the damaged offshore well at Nowruz has been sighted north of Bahrain and northeast of the Saudi Arabian coast, near Ras Tanura. Bahraini officials expect the slick will first pollute shorelines from Umm Nasan to Sanabis and then move east toward Manama. Additional fragmented slicks as large as 7 kilometers long and 50 meters wide have been reported to the north.

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Comment: Strong winds are pushing the patches toward Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. If they persist, some of the desalinization plants on the affected coasts would probably have to cease operation as long as the oil remains in the area. Any water shortages, however, would be localized.

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ALGERIA-ITALY: Gas Accord Signed

The signature on Wednesday by Algiers and Rome of the final agreement for the purchase of Algerian natural gas will allow gas to begin flowing through the trans-Mediterranean pipeline soon, possibly as early as June. The last obstacle was cleared when the Italian Senate approved a subsidy to cover the difference between the sale price and the market price—to be paid to the state-controlled Italian gas company. An Italian official says Rome now can begin deliberations about buying Soviet gas.

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Comment: Rome will probably continue to delay concluding a gas deal with Moscow in order to reduce its large trade deficit with the USSR and to persuade it to lower gas prices. Production problems in Algeria's major gasfields are likely to prevent it from meeting all of its export commitments. Sales of oil exported through the pipeline offer the greatest profit for Algeria, and Algiers probably will cut deliveries of liquefied natural gas to the US and other customers, in order to meet its commitments to Italy.

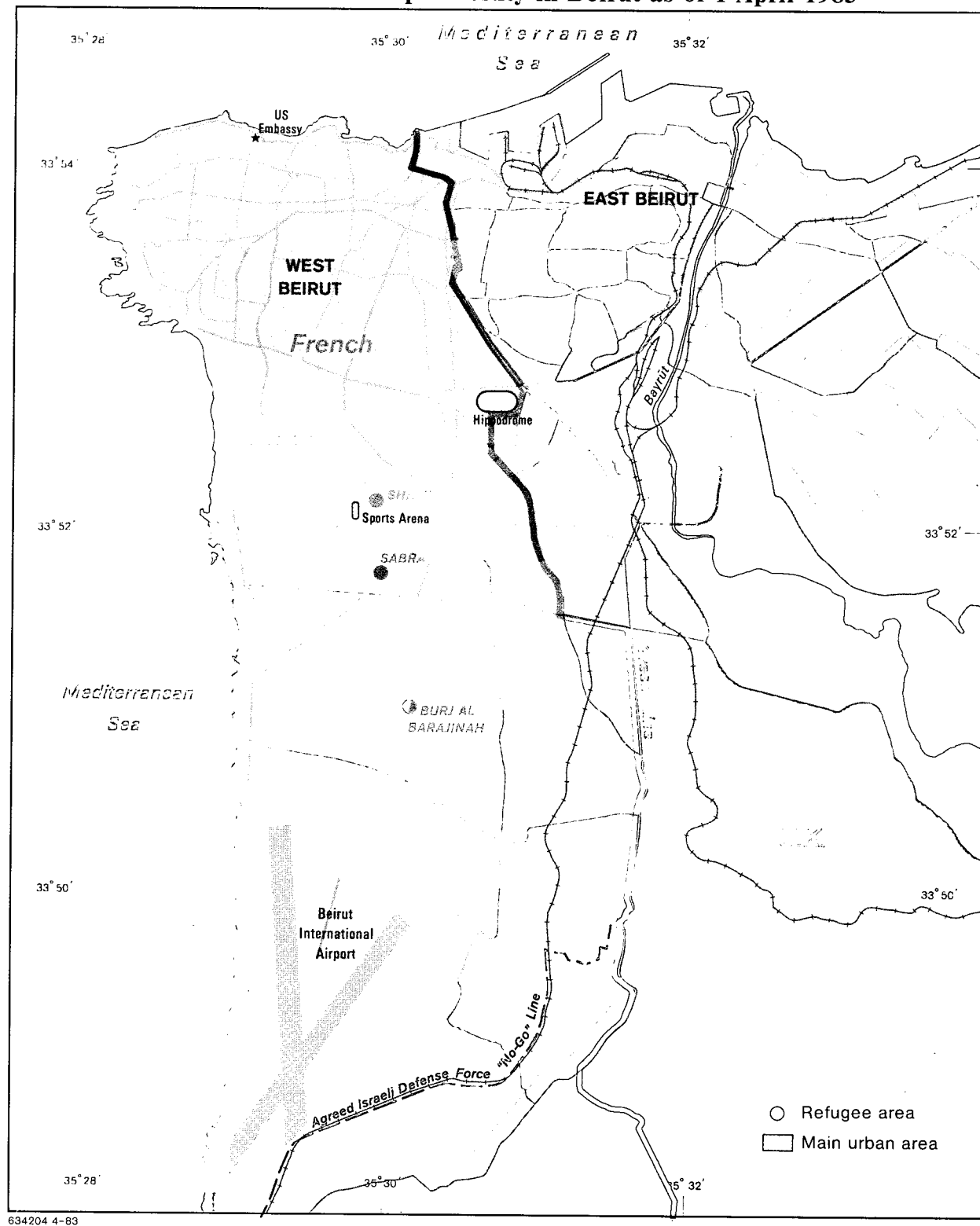
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Multinational Force Areas of Responsibility in Beirut as of 1 April 1983**Top Secret**

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Special Analysis

WESTERN EUROPE-LEBANON: Status of the MNF

The mounting violence in Beirut has not shaken the commitment of France, Italy, and the UK to provide troops for the Multinational Force while negotiations on the future of Lebanon proceed. All three governments currently are prepared to take risks in order to assist the Lebanese Government and to advance their own foreign policies. The MNF has already been in place longer than expected, however, and both the British and Italian Governments may have second thoughts about their continued participation if the effort becomes too costly in lives or money.

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The French evidently expect a lengthy stay in Lebanon, and Paris has indicated it is prepared to expand its contingent. Rome also expressed a willingness to consider increasing its participation.

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There is growing concern, however, about the slow pace of the negotiations. The three governments are worried that, with each passing month, the danger to their troops will increase.

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France hopes to strengthen longstanding ties with Lebanon and to underscore its commitment to pursue a balanced policy in the region. Italy uses its participation to demonstrate an assertive foreign policy and to expand its role in Mediterranean affairs. The UK committed troops to show its support for the US peace initiative and to promote a role for London.

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Composition and Operations

The MNF consists of about 5,300 US, French, Italian, and British troops. The French contingent of some 2,000 men includes paratroops and mine-clearing specialists from elite intervention forces.

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Italy is contributing 700 support troops and 1,300 combat troops equipped with armored personnel carriers. A British armored reconnaissance unit with 100 troops and 22 armored scout cars joined the MNF in early February.

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The mission of the MNF, under ground rules worked out with the Lebanese and Israeli Governments, is to provide a "presence" and to assist the Lebanese Government in reestablishing its authority in the Beirut area. The MNF troops conduct patrols and back up Lebanese forces within the sectors for which they are responsible. [redacted]

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French combat engineers also perform the dangerous work of clearing roads and buildings of mines, booby traps, and unexploded ammunition. Two Italian battalions have been assigned practically full time to guarding refugee camps within their sector. [redacted]

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Since January, there have been sporadic attacks on MNF patrols. Three attacks in mid-March left one Italian soldier dead and several Italian, French, and US troops wounded. [redacted]

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The MNF contingents are not expected to prevent infiltration or engage militarily the warring factions in Lebanon. As a result, Israel does not see the MNF as a force capable of protecting its interests or preventing threats to its troops or territory. [redacted]

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Prospects for Continuing Support

French Defense Minister Hernu has said that Paris probably would agree to send another 1,500 troops if the US would also expand its commitment. Defense and Foreign Ministry officials claim that public support for the MNF is substantial, but they worry that France's contribution may appear to be excessive. [redacted]

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The French officials also would prefer that a multilateral peacekeeping force ultimately be brought under UN auspices, perhaps in the form of an expansion of the UN Forces in Lebanon. Paris, however, probably would not make this a condition for continued participation. [redacted]

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In Italy—as in the UK—public support for participation in the MNF is fragile and depends largely on holding down costs and casualties. Following attacks in mid-March on Italian troops, the Italian parliament launched an inquiry and Defense Minister Lagorio led a delegation to Lebanon. During the inquiry, legislators questioned the cost of the operation—Italy is spending about \$4 million per month to support its contingent—and the practical benefits of Rome's involvement. [redacted]

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Lagorio successfully parried these questions during the parliamentary debate, and both he and Foreign Minister Colombo have since reiterated Rome's support for the MNF. Although the coming election probably will not lead to a change in these policies, Rome's determination could erode over time.

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After the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut, Colombo said that, without progress on troop withdrawals, Italy might be forced to reconsider the political basis of its commitment. Moreover, the government has pledged not to expand Italy's commitment without consultation with parliament.

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The British Government is likely to agree to extend its contingent from May to August, but its contingency financing for the effort will be exhausted by the end of the summer. Unless the Ministry of Defense picks up the bill, the British unit will have to be withdrawn at that time. In addition, the public reaction to any British casualties probably would force the government to rethink its willingness to participate.

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